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Institutiones Oratoriae by Giambattista Vico

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change Heidegger's point. In *Was ist das—die Philosophie?*, Heidegger stresses that since Descartes the Greek *pathos* (the "sense of wonder" before the *Kosmos*) has been replaced by method and the quest for certainty. This is the experience of modernity. Besides, "spatializing" time, as Baudelaire did, is no solution to the philosophical dead end of time's issue. It is Marramao himself who points out that time has *always* been "spatially" represented. Furthermore, Baudelaire's "spatialization" of time looks more like the fulfillment of the project of modernity than the restoration of a "classical" balance that is lost and it is not possible to revive. Yet, Baudelaire understands the symbolic, *aionic* power of metaphors more than any other modern poet, but his aim is to clarify his vision in a way that is not opposed to Descartes' project. Baudelaire "spatializes" time to put it *into perspective*, in the most clear and visible *representation*. It is hard to see how Baudelaire can be included in Marramao's *spostamento laterale*. Why didn't Marramao proceed to investigate the relationship between time and the current bio-physical sciences? Prigogine's metaphysics is not the only one which needs to be "deconstructed."

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Institutiones Oratoriae

By Giambattista Vico

Critical text, notes, and introductory essay by Giuliano Crifò.

Naples: Istituto Suor Orsola Benincasa, 1989

The difficult circumstances of Giambattista Vico's life are well-documented. The son of a bookseller of very modest means, he managed to earn a degree in law, despite many difficulties. After several years ("a stranger in his own country") at Vatolla nel Cilento as a tutor to the sons of the rich Marquis Domenico Rocca, Vico decided in 1699, at the age of 31, to compete for the chair of rhetoric at the University of Naples. Although he had originally intended to teach rhetoric only temporarily, upon winning the chair he resigned himself to going no further, disappointed and embittered in his hopes to win a chair of law. Rhetoric thus became for the Neapolitan philosopher the study of a lifetime.

It is to his teaching of that "most difficult art of saying" that we owe the *Institutiones Oratoriae*, his collected university lectures, which he clearly made his students study. An abbreviated Italian version was published in 1844 and republished the following year in a Latin edition based on the original text put forth by Vico in 1711. The *Institutiones* have never been of particular interest to the historiography of Vico's philosophy, considered as they are to be of little importance in the general structure of his thought and even today dismissed as a "merely academic task," a dry, sterile work of compilation, according to the view expressed by Italian Neo-Idealism, and particularly by Fausto Nicolini. Furthermore, the many studies by Nicolini alone (who with Croce also edited the critical edition of Vico's

works) had until now dated the most complete version of the manuscript to 1718, thus relegating it to the period of Vico's minor works, and at any rate to the period before *Scienza Nuova*. Now on the basis of a previously unedited manuscript dating back to 1741, which contains the *Institutiones Oratoriae*—the lectures on rhetoric that Vico put out and modified throughout his life, working on them at least until the year before he abandoned his university work—have been published for the first time in their entirety in a critical edition edited by Giuliano Crifò, in the original Latin with the Italian on facing pages.

This fact is of particular interest for at least two reasons. First, it brings to the attention of scholars a considerable body of Vico's rhetorical studies, with which he concerned himself until his death. Secondly, it highlights the continuity and coherence of Vico's rhetorical thought, which until now had been undervalued or crudely neglected by critics. Furthermore, the *Institutiones* allow us to return to the sources of Vichian rhetorical thought (e.g. Aristotle, Quintilian, Cicero), while still providing us with a clear presentation of the expository models and argumentative frameworks used by Vico.

Nevertheless, one now asks: What is the work's place within the whole body of Vichian thought? It is necessary first to understand the origins of Nicolini's disparaging judgment, since even today this precludes a proper evaluation not only of the work itself, but of the entirety of Vico's work on rhetoric. Nicolini's criticism that Vico's *Rhetoricae liber* is completely extraneous to his thought and of "no scientific importance," is based on the conviction that there is an irreconcilable contradiction between Vico's teaching of rhetoric and the doctrine of tropes found in *Scienza Nuova*.

Nicolini maintains that when Vico sought to reconcile his "old notebook" with the *Scienza Nuova* in his final years, he was forced to eliminate nearly half the notebook and, in particular, just those paragraphs concerning tropes and figures of speech and thought. Referring to a version of the *Institutiones* in the so-called Croce manuscript dated (erroneously) to 1738, Nicolini maintains that the change in Vico's thought about the significance of tropes, if dating back to 1721, would not have conserved the fundamental concepts of traditional rhetoric about tropes and figures of speech. This, Nicolini claims, explains the absence of the part about tropes in Croce's version of the manuscript.

Now, however, on the basis of dates found within the body of Vico's work itself and present *ad abundantiam* (cf. XXVIII-XL), editor Giuliano Crifò dismantles the entire structure of Nicolini's criticism. Crifò demonstrates not only the persistence of Vico's rhetorical convictions up to the final version of *Scienza Nuova*, but also their continual and close intertwining with the rest of his work, thus restoring to his rhetorical work the substance and importance it merits. It should be further noted that Nicolini's criticism is part of a general disdain for rhetoric, which he considers "merely normative and empirical pseudoscience," an opinion certainly reinforced by Croce's position in *Estetica come scienza dell'espressione e linguistica generale*, according to which a true legitimization of rhetoric as science is not possible.

Crifò notes that following numerous studies, completed largely in the past twenty years concerning not only Vico's major works, but also those usually considered minor, one must admit that the situation has changed. All the same, there is still some uncertainty on the part of critics with regard

to this work: "a new line of research into Vico's rhetorical studies has finally opened, without, however, seeing any urgency to reestablish, above all, that contact with the text of *Institutiones*, able to guarantee it an appropriate placement in the field of Vichian culture and of the studies on Vico" (XLV). The renewed interest in the whole of Vichian rhetorical work—as evidenced by the contributions of varied disciplines (from linguistics to epistemology to philology and so forth) and by the conspicuous theoretical contributions of Momigliano, Pagliaro, Berlin, Tagliacozzo, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, Giuliani, Fubini, De Mauro, Battistini, Mooney, Verene, and many others—underlines a growing critical awareness of a no longer negligible facet of Vico's thought. Still, continues Crifò, "even if some scholars have valued the connection between the *Institutiones* and Vico's later statements, the real importance of such a connection has still not become an established part of the scientific instrumentation with which one can study Vico" (XLVII). In other cases, some

new approaches seem to be more the effect of the methodology and sensibility present in other fields of research and applied to the interpretation of the Vichian work than drawn from the interior of this work. And that could also explain the persistent silence (with the above exceptions) about the *Institutiones*, as well as the fact that even with these exceptions taken into consideration, one is, however, not always and not entirely freed from the canonized teaching of Nicolini. (XLV).

Crifò insists, and he is certainly right, on the necessity of placing Vico's rhetorical work within the context of his thought, even while believing, however, that that does not mean that "in the *Institutiones* one finds an account of Vico's metaphysics or anthropology. One finds there, however, an account of logic and culture"

(XLII). In the *Institutiones* one nevertheless finds a constant preoccupation, almost an obsession, to clash with the canonical opposition typical of the modern age, between sensibility and intellect, between mind and heart, or, better—between "tongue and heart." Discussing the disassociation extolled by Descartes, the Neapolitan thinker accused Descartes of wanting to "geometrize" human experience:

The application of geometric method to civil discourse is the same as eliminating from human reality impulse, risk, chance, and fortune; to admit nothing sharp-witted or subtle in discourse, and to state only that which is immediately obvious; to feed listeners, like school children, only bread that has already been chewed. (§ 9).

In this work, it seems further essential to Vico to underline the very close connection between rhetoric and philosophy, maintained from *Orazioni inaugurali* on and above all in *De ratione*. The supremacy of the intellect advanced by Cartesianism that has "corrupted" rhetoric because it has rendered philosophy "dry" and "arid," has been thus surpassed by Vico in the name of an organic contextuality of human faculties that prepares to mend the breach between rhetoric and philosophy, these being originally linked. Vico writes, in fact,

In the greatest age of Greek philosophy there was no word for the specialist [in rhetoric], given that one learned rhetoric with philosophy. . . . But when it happened that the study of philosophy was separated from that of eloquence, to which it was naturally related, and the separation between tongue and heart had begun, the masters of this art, lacking all philosophy and useless talkers took the name of sophists, that is to say, the ancient name of philosophers. (§ 1).

And elsewhere he incisively notes, "Philosophy is the most useful instrument to rhetoric" (§ 9).

For Vico, therefore, rhetoric is not at all extraneous to philosophy; it is, instead, an integral part. Since rhetoric is the art of persuasion by sound argument, it is the bearer of

truth, a truth, however, that lives in discourse and in language, and that needs therefore the consensus of those to whom it is directed. Reading the *Institutiones Oratoriae* it is possible to recognize a linguistic community, with its own characteristics and its own rules, to which Vico seems to address himself, one that allows a glimpse of the prospect of a civil community (for Vico, "figurative speech," or "speaking well conceptually," constitutes the original and most typical form of human discourse): as has been underlined by many critics, it is from here that the enormous "political" implications of Vichian thought arise. In this view, too, the continuity of fundamental problems and thematic openings are confirmed in the entire work of the Parthenopean philosopher.

In short, if on the one hand the *Institutiones* should be considered as one of the fundamental works with which Vico's masterpiece *Scienza Nuova* was constructed, and not as an arid and sterile task of compilation, on the other hand they underline the intrinsic connection between the teaching of rhetoric and the total scope of Vico's thought.

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Fascism in Film: The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1931-43

By Marcia Landy

Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986

Originally dismissed as merely escapist or as a vehicle of propaganda for the regime, Italian cinema of the Fascist era has, in recent years, undergone an intense reevaluation. Pre-

viously, filmmakers, critics and theorists of post-war cinema denied any possible influence the films of these two decades might have had upon their works, even though many of these figures—such as Vittorio de Sica, Cesare Zavattini and other neorealist pioneers—were themselves involved in the industry during those years. Film histories, especially those available in English, conspicuously neglect this period of cinematic production in Italy.

Marcia Landy, in this excellent study of the commercial cinema of fascism, sheds light upon Neorealism's apparent anxiety of influence by tracing that movement's roots in its predecessors. However, her objective is not merely to establish Fascist cinema's credibility by linking it inextricably to the more critically accepted neorealist period. Through an examination of Fascist ideology and its manifestations in films of that period, she convincingly shows not only how that ideology was cinematically constructed but also how that very ideology was represented as being neither entirely monolithic nor simply an example of false consciousness.

Fascism was not a consistent force in Italy and certainly did not go unchallenged; the large number of anti-fascist intellectuals, including many directors, disproves the notion of its widespread acceptance. Appropriately, throughout this study Landy reinforces the varying cinematic representation of Italian society within the genres, the narrative structure, and the cinematic iconography from one of apparent harmony and resolution to one of conflict, anxiety, and greater ambiguity.

As Landy correctly points out in her preface, only from 300 to 350 films remain of the more than 700 produced during the Fascist period. In an extremely interesting and effective